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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 003382

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SUBJECT: GOI FAVORS NEPAL CEASE-FIRE MONITORING UNDER UN
UMBRELLA

REF: KATHMANDU 1251

Classified By: PolCouns Geoff Pyatt for reasons 1.4 (B,D)

¶1. (C) Summary: Noting that that India does not want to be unilaterally involved in maintaining the peace in Nepal, MEA Under Secretary (Nepal) Manish Gupta indicated on May 16 that the GOI would not oppose UN involvement in monitoring the cease-fire between the Maoists and Government of Nepal. The British High Commission provided a readout of their May 12 meeting with Special Advisor to the UN Undersecretary General for Political Affairs Tamrat Samuel, who reported that MEA Joint Secretary (North) Pankaj Saran told him the GOI envisioned the cease-fire monitoring being conducted by "national actors under a UN umbrella." Accordingly, Samuel understood that the GOI ruled out any role for the UN in formal mediation, but would acquiesce to targeted and technical UN cease-fire monitoring by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). MEA's Gupta noted it will be important for the Seven Party Alliance (SPA) to "bargain as a united front with the Maoists," in order effectively to counter their "more unreasonable demands." Echoing Foreign Secretary Saran's comments on the dire economic situation in Nepal, Gupta proffered that the economic indicators do not look good, and worried how the GON would meet its recurring expenditures. Gupta remarked that the GOI has yet to provided assistance to the new government, as it is waiting for a formal request. End Summary.

GOI: The UN Role in Nepal

¶2. (C) The GOI is not looking to be uni|aterally involved in maintaining the peace in Nepal and would not oppose UN involvement in monitoring the cease-fire between the Maoists and Government of Nepal, MEA Under Secretary (Nepal) Manish Gupta told us on May 16. According to our interlocutors at

the British High Commission, MEA Joint Secretary (North) Pankaj Saran told UN Special Advisor Tamrat Samuel that the GOI favored a the cease-fire monitoring operation conducted by "national actors under a UN umbrella." The UK readout noted that Saran ruled out any role for the UN in formal mediation, but was noncommittal on the UN being a third-party witness to the talks. Samuel told the British he took this as Indian acquiescence to targeted and technical UN cease-fire monitoring by OHCHR with a possible further UN role in election monitoring and arms management. Gupta commented to poloff that "it is for the GON and UN to decide how to structure the details of the monitoring operations."

Political Machinations

¶3. (C) MEA's Gupta remarked that it is important that the cease-fire monitoring agreement allow the GON to negotiate from a position of strength, as the Maoists will use any perceived weakness to their advantage. For this reason, the GOI believes it essential that the SPA demonstrate unity when negotiating with the Maoists.

¶4. (C) Regarding the 10 point road map released by the Maoists on May 13 (reftel), Gupta remarked that a step-by-step process is needed to resolve the political problems in Nepal, but indicated that dissolving the House of Representatives before another government is formed is not a good idea. Postulating that the proposed constituent assembly elections would be eight to twelve months away, he argued that a hasty disbanding of the current government

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would be detrimental to a lasting solution.

Economic Concerns

¶5. (C) Nepal is facing serious economic problems and will soon be unable to pay its reoccurring expenditures, Gupta predicted. He commented that recent economic indicators "do not look good," with the economy likely growing at only about one percent in 2006. MEA also predicted that fertilizer supply problems will result in food shortages later in the year. He highlighted that with the forecasted poor harvest and the lack of any government program to deliver emergency food aid, a serious food shortage may occur. To date, the GON has not requested economic assistance from the GOI, Gupta noted, however, New Delhi would likely respond positively when formally asked.

¶6. (U) Visit New Delhi's Classified Website:
(<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/sa/newdelhi/>)
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